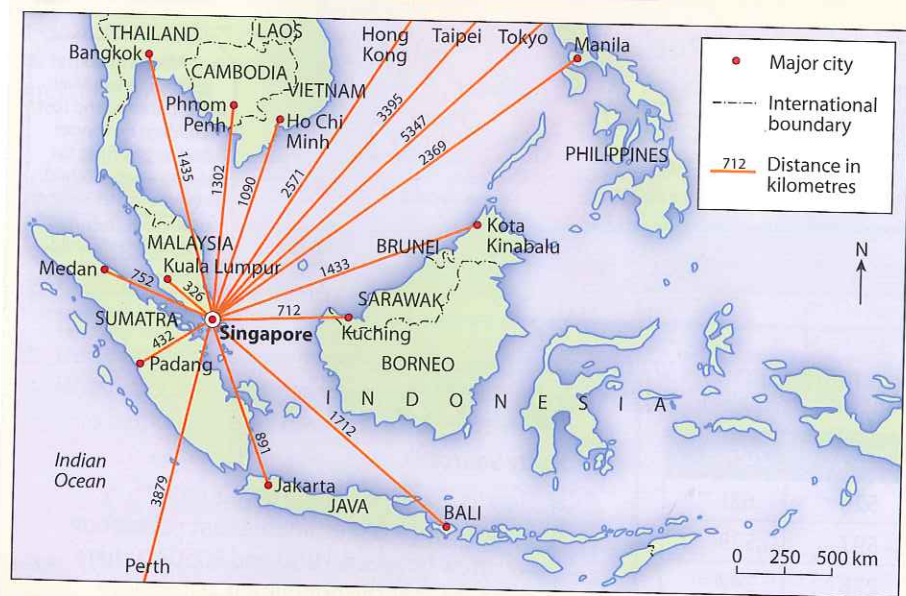


Singapore: one island, many people

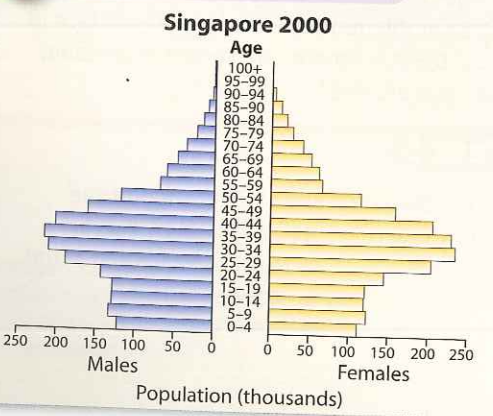
Once a British colony, Singapore has been an independent city state since 1965. It has limited natural resources and space and yet, in the last 40 years, it has become one of the most advanced manufacturing nations in south-east Asia. Despite this economic success the country has struggled to manage its population numbers.

Since independence Singapore has introduced population control policies. From 1957 to the mid-1980s the government tried to discourage large families but then found population growth had become too low to provide a young, vibrant workforce to develop the economy of the future. In a reversal of policy the government decided to encourage rapid population growth. Despite limitations of living space, the population is now almost 4.7 million on an island with an area of 620 km².

A Singapore – the crossroads of south-east Asia



C Population pyramid, 2000



Task 1

Study Source A.

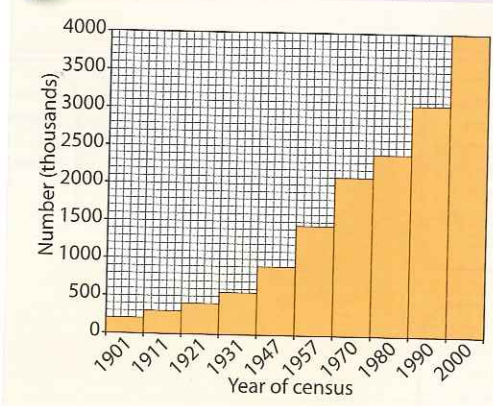
- Describe the location of Singapore. Why is it called 'the crossroads of Asia'?
- Calculate the average number of people per square kilometre in Singapore.
- Suggest three problems that an increasing population might cause for the island.

Task 2

Study Source B.

- What is unusual about the year interval on the horizontal axis? Explain this.
- Describe how population changed between 1901 and 2000.
- Give two examples of policies used in the 'Stop at Two' campaign.

B Population change in Singapore, 1901–2000



- Population of 1.47 million but growing quickly. Annual fertility rate (children per woman) peaks at 6.4. Family planning offered in 1959.
- Independence – no longer a British colony. Fertility rate down to 4.8. Government wanted to reduce population as large numbers of children and young people are seen as a threat to living standards and political stability: there would not be enough schools, hospitals and jobs, leading to civil unrest.
- Abortion and voluntary sterilisation made legal. The 'Stop at Two' campaign introduced population 'disincentives' such as:
 - extra taxes for a 3rd child
 - no paid maternity leave for 3rd child
 - parents with more than 2 children could not enrol in best schools.
 Successful policies reduced fertility rate to less than 2 by 1980s.

Increasing the population

By the 1980s the low rate of population growth was causing the government some concern. Also, the most educated citizens were having fewer children. In 1983 Prime Minister Lee Yuan Kew expressed his concern that male university graduates preferred less well educated wives, so female graduates were not getting married and bearing children. In the mid-1980s Singapore completely reversed its population policies. Not only did it actively pursue policies to increase population through natural growth and immigration. It also developed policies to influence the type of people who had children. In 1984, children of female university graduates were offered places at the best schools, and a grant of 10 000 SGD* was given to less well educated women who agreed to be sterilised after the birth of their second child.

* 1000 Singapore dollars (SGD) = 700 US dollars

D Mid-1980s to the 21st century: population too low ...

HAVE THREE OR MORE, IF YOU CAN AFFORD IT

- If you have three or more babies, look what you can get.
- Tax rebates for the third child.
 - Subsidies for day-care.
 - Priority in enrolling at the best schools.
 - Priority in gaining housing for large families.
 - Extended sick leave.
 - Up to 4 years' maternity leave for civil servants.
- Contact our counselling service if you are considering abortion or sterilisation.
- DON'T PASSIVELY WATCH OURSELVES GO EXTINCT!**

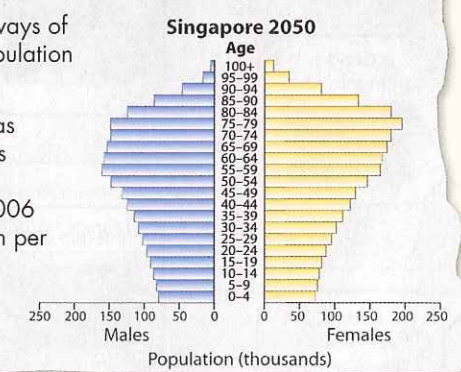
Year	Children per woman
1957	6.4
1965	4.8
1975	2.0
1985	1.6
1995	1.7
2005	1.4

E The next 50 years ...

Singapore predicts population will expand to 6.5 million in 40–50 years!

Singapore's land planners are exploring new ways of creating space to accommodate a possible population increase of 40% over the next 40 to 50 years.

Faced with a declining birth rate, Singapore has embarked on an aggressive drive to increase its population. There are incentives to have more children. Immigration will be encouraged. In 2006 the birth rate fell to a record low of 1.3 children per female. This is the 28th consecutive year it has dropped below the 'replacement rate' needed to maintain the population.



Sample case study question

For a country you have studied, describe the policies used by the government to reduce rates of population growth.

Task 3

Study Source C.

- How can you tell that policies to reduce the birth rate were in operation after 1965?
- Suggest why the government reversed its policies and encouraged population growth from the mid-1980s.

Task 4

Study Source D.

- List three incentives of the 'Have Three or More' scheme.
- Suggest which income groups this was aimed at. Why?
- What evidence shows that the scheme did not increase birth rates? Suggest why.
- Give two reasons why Singapore's population continued to grow.

Unfortunately, despite all the incentives, the birth rate stayed at its lowest level of 1.4 children per woman in 1987 – far less than needed to maintain the population. Working people wanted more material assets and men and women were keen to pursue careers. Marriages were later too. The government tried other means such as a campaign to promote the joys of marriage and parenthood and a matchmaking agency for those with A levels. It also offered a 20 000 SGD tax rebate for the fourth child. But the birth rate remained low. However, 20 000 people enter Singapore each year to work and the population continues to increase due to the large numbers born before the mid-1980s. The problems facing the government will be a large elderly population to be housed on limited land as well as a small working population supporting a large number of old people.

Demographer at the University of Singapore

Task 5

Study Source E.

- How will Singapore's projected population change by 2050?
- Look at the projected pyramid for 2050. Imagine you are the Minister of Housing Development. Write a short paper (maximum 150 words) outlining:
 - three problems facing the government
 - three possible solutions to these problems.
 Present your views to your classmates.